

# Setting the Agenda for Evangelical Scholarship to 2050:

## New Testament

[Introduction]

My first suggestion would be to build on the renaissance of biblical theology in recent years and to produce works that go about discerning the theology of a given NT writer (or the NT as a whole) in a way that is methodologically sound, salvation-historical in orientation, and literary in approach. Don Carson's *New Studies in Biblical Theology* series is already making a strong contribution in this area. I also know that in the next few years Zondervan will release a series called *Biblical Theology of the NT*, with 5 volumes projected on the theology of Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, John, and Paul, with Darrell Bock and Doug Moo among the contributors.

A second suggestion would be for NT (and OT) scholars to implement Kevin Vanhoozer's hermeneutical program of a theodramatic hermeneutic that understands biblical truth as being conveyed through the various scriptural literary genres. Vanhoozer is a brilliant mind, and is thoroughly conversant with the literature on the subject, but he is a systematic theologian, not a biblical scholar, and rarely cites Scripture. Hence the need for someone, or several people, to bring Vanhoozer's ideas "down to earth," as it were, and to flesh out his proposals in the form of concrete interpretations of specific NT (and OT) texts.

Third, with the arrival of rather sophisticated computer resources, I am hoping for more definitive works and studies in the area of NT Greek. This should include syntactical and grammatical studies and reference works as well as explorations of the uses of the Greek verb (including further testing of Greek verbal aspect theory) and other matters. In the area of Greek lexicography, John Lee has recently issued a pointed challenge to start over, rather than to

perpetrate the mistakes and biases of our forebears, as grateful as we ought to be for their labors. Lee himself, together with Richard Horsley, is working on a replacement for Moulton and Milligan. Could there be a replacement of Kittel's *TDNT* or Strack-Billerbeck's *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*?

Fourth, I would like to see more books written for the classroom. Too many of us write our books essentially for our academic peers or the larger academic community rather than for students or people in the churches. Good examples in recent years include Baker's Encountering series, the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, and some of the new materials Kregel is producing, but much more could be done in this area. One example might be a good book on how to move from NT Greek exegesis to preaching.

One final area would be that of the Christian life or sanctification. There is a need for those engaged in theological education to mentor younger students in the ethos of scholarship, in the pursuit of godliness, in the integration of faith and learning, and in proper personal deportment in the academic arena. Perhaps it is my experience as Director of Ph.D. Studies at my institution that has made me realize that there is a dire need of spiritual formation on the higher levels of theological education. Why do we still need to assign Helmut Thielicke's *Little Exercise for Young Theologians* as reading in this area? We need to do more conscious thinking and publishing on the calling and craft of the Christian scholar.

That's it for now.

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